

April Is National Minority Health Month

During National Minority Health Month in April, the Department of Health and Hospitals Bureau of Minority Health Access and Promotions (BMHA) joins Amerigroup in raising public awareness about health and health care disparities that continue to affect racial and ethnic minorities and efforts to advance health equity.

“As a Department, we are committed to eliminating disparities in health and access to health care in our state,” DHH Secretary Dr. Rebekah E. Gee said. “Minority Health Month is a chance to bring this issue into the spotlight and start a conversation about the work that we are doing this month and year-round to bridge that gap.”

The theme for Louisiana Minority Health Month 2016, sponsored by Amerigroup, is “Own Your Own Health.” This month serves as an opportunity to highlight national and local efforts toward eliminating health disparities and advancing health equity, including legislative policy and actions such as HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, and the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities.

Minority Health Month is designed to be a month-long, high-visibility health promotion and disease prevention campaign. Conducted with and by community-based agencies and organizations, this celebration reaches into urban, suburban and rural areas of the State.

Minority Health Month is designed to:

- promote healthy lifestyles;
- provide crucial information to allow individuals to practice disease prevention;
- showcase the resources for and providers of grass roots health care and information;
- highlight the resolution of the disparate health conditions between Louisiana's minority and non-minority populations; and
- gain additional support for the ongoing efforts to improve minority health year round.

Health Disparities

Health disparities are differences in the overall rate of disease incidence, prevalence, morbidity, mortality or survival rates. Disparities result not only in a lower overall quality of life among those impacted, but their families and communities as well.

The month of April is acknowledged by many states and organizations as National Minority Health Month, providing a high-visibility campaign for many year-round activities. In Louisiana, during this annual month-long observance, community groups, faith-based organizations, regional and local health departments and other public and private entities join in the promotion of activities such as health screenings, educational events, health fairs and assessments. Issues addressed by these activities may include cancer, heart disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, mental health, cultural awareness, urban and rural health needs and gender issues.

Throughout the year BMHA, in conjunction with its local partners, will raise a call for all Louisiana residents to take action towards ending health disparities in their community. Together through our collective efforts we can accelerate momentum towards achieving a state free of disparities in health and health care.

To find out more about the Louisiana Minority Health Month Campaign, contact the Louisiana Bureau of Minority Health Access and Promotions at 225-342-4886 or visit the website: www.dhh.la.gov/mha. Louisiana Minority Health Month is sponsored by:

